Postsecondary Education Working Group on Access to Academic Programs

A variety of Council policies enacted over the last 25 years have addressed coordinating statewide accessibility to postsecondary programs and services while minimizing non-productive competition and duplication across the public and private sectors. These include current Council policies on extended campuses and regional postsecondary education centers. The terrain for higher education has changed dramatically over the last ten years. Distance education has become a central strategy for program delivery. The Kentucky Virtual Campus has implemented a new strategic plan. Kentucky has become the first state to enact a regional stewardship program. Current policies should be reviewed in the current postsecondary environment that is characterized by higher degree production demands, greater campus entrepreneurship, shifting student populations, and current Council oversight responsibilities. A working group is requested to review the policy issues related to the delivery of institutional programs and courses and to provide recommendations tied to improved postsecondary access and productivity.

ACTION: The staff recommends that the Council charge a working group made up of both providers and consumers of postsecondary programs with reviewing policies related to the Council's role in approval of postsecondary academic programs, including extended-campus offerings and authorization and operation of extended-campus centers. The review should include, but not be limited to, regional postsecondary education centers and extended-campus policies to further the 2020 Public Agenda's call for increased postsecondary access while promoting productivity and efficient use of resources. The working group should provide a report to the Council at its November 2007 meeting.

Introduction

Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions make courses accessible to students at a variety of locations and through distance learning. Traditional courses are delivered at sites beyond the main campus, including manufacturing plants, hospitals, correctional facilities, military bases, and high schools. Two Council policies currently provide requirements for specific off-site campus entities: regional postsecondary education centers and extended-campus offerings.

Since postsecondary education reform in 1998, the Council's strategic agenda and accountability systems have been implemented and updated. Enrollments and degrees are at

record levels but must continue to grow at even higher rates. New student populations (i.e., adults) must be cultivated to meet these degree production targets. Institutional flexibility is required to meet local employer demands and to coordinate effectively with proprietary and out-of-state institutions. After years of streamlined administrative policies the Council is now increasing accountability demands in targeted areas to support the Public Agenda. Current conditions prompt the following questions about program approval and off-site course delivery policies:

- What changes, if any, are needed in program approval and extended-campus policies to support efficient use of resources to continue meeting the legislative mandates and stewardship responsibilities of the Council?

- What changes, if any, are needed in program approval and extended-campus policies to provide necessary postsecondary access while maintaining efficiency, productivity, and quality?

- How can these policy changes help institutions deliver required quality academic services and help Kentucky meet its "Double the Number" goals?

Current Policies

Extended-campus policies were initially established by the Council during the late 1970s and were generally defined as "a recognized administrative entity through which the planning, organization, and delivery of extended-campus offerings are carried out." Extended-campuses were not degree-granting units but a conduit for delivering the services of the main campus in an effective and efficient manner. All centers were expected to adhere to the criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Approval for designation as an extended-campus center, providing additional funding in the Council's funding formula, was based on ten specific characteristics and meeting both headcount and FTE enrollment criteria.

Areas of geographic responsibility (AGR), an assigned group of nearby counties for each university, were closely affiliated with extended campuses. AGRs were originally assigned to each public four-year institution as "service regions" to represent the geographic area for extended course offerings. More recently, service areas have been redefined in the Council's strategic plan as areas of geographic responsibility in the institutional mission parameters and in the Regional Stewardship Trust Fund program for comprehensive universities. Institutions are to assess the educational, economic, and community development needs in their area and to either support those needs directly or to facilitate support from other postsecondary resources as a broker of services.

The most recent review of the extended-campus policy was conducted in November 1999. As part of a series of streamlined academic program policies, Guidelines for Extended-Campus Offerings were developed and approved. Council Web site notification for program

and course offerings outside of an institution's AGR was required. The policy was difficult to implement. Advance notice posting requirements sometimes conflict with the need to be responsive to regional requests. Also, a preliminary review of data showed that off-campus courses taught outside an institution's AGR are quite limited for all universities, except the University of Kentucky. Due to UK's Cooperative Extension Service's outreach mission, UK offered just 5 percent of off-site courses within its AGR. For all other universities, 95 percent of off-site courses were taught in one of the AGR counties. During a fall semester, on average, a total of only 57 off-campus courses are taught in counties beyond the AGR counties of universities other than UK.

Regional postsecondary education centers were established by legislation in 1998 and then implemented according to guidelines established by the Council. In response to HB 321, the Council developed and approved planning assumptions and guidelines to direct the creation of these centers. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System and the participating universities were directed to build a facility, incorporating community residents in the planning of the facilities. The centers were to meet identified local needs documented through a required assessment of student and community needs for academic programs and student services within the region. Planners were required to include at least one ITV-equipped classroom; a satellite down-link compatible with Kentucky Educational Television requirements; and advising, testing, and other relevant student services, including computer laboratory access for virtual university students in the region.

Five regional postsecondary centers were established by HB 321 in 1998, and a sixth center was established during the 2000-02 legislative sessions.

1. Eastern Kentucky University and KCTCS: South East Regional Postsecondary Education Center—London, Corbin, and Somerset, Kentucky.
2. Western Kentucky University and KCTCS: Southern Regional Postsecondary Education Center—Glasgow, Kentucky.
3. WKU and KCTCS: Central Regional Postsecondary Education Center—Elizabethtown, Kentucky.
4. Morehead State University and KCTCS: North East Regional Postsecondary Education Center—Prestonsburg, Kentucky.
5. Murray State University and KCTCS: West Regional Postsecondary Education Center—Hopkinsville, Kentucky.
6. KCTCS: South Central Regional Postsecondary Education Center—Albany, Kentucky.

Problem Statement

Significant changes in Kentucky's postsecondary education environment have occurred over the nine years since postsecondary education reform began. These shifts in student populations, campus degree production goals, the competitive environment for postsecondary education, and use of distance education have created a new environment for academic program delivery. The Council's policies should address these changes and maintain its responsibilities as outlined in KRS 164.020(13).

1. Shifting Student Populations – "Double the Numbers" requires that the Council produce more baccalaureate graduates than at any time previously. Council initiatives to improve transfer student matriculation, the reentry of adult students, reduction of opportunity gaps for minority students, and promotion of postsecondary goals to GED graduates will require delivery of more accessible and affordable courses and programs throughout the state. Effective use of new and existing facilities has become more urgent to reach these new student populations.

2. Higher Degree Production Demands – Maintaining adequate access to academic courses and programs will be essential to meeting the goals of House Bill 1 and attaining the national average of the percent of adult population with a bachelor's degree. The Council completed a 2020 projections study to estimate the enrollments and degrees needed to achieve this goal and determined that the number of bachelor's degree holders must double within the next 13 years.

3. Change in Competitive Environment – Public and independent nonprofit institutions are competing in a student enrollment market with proprietary institutions. Individual models of collaboration and extended-campus offerings are emerging. WKU is planning a new facility in Owensboro, a community with two-year and independent postsecondary institutions. Also the University Center of the Mountains, a consortium of five participating postsecondary institutions, was established in 2003 and meets many of the guidelines for regional postsecondary education centers. The Council has responsibility to coordinate these activities to ensure effective use of postsecondary resources.

4. Expanding Distance Education – The Council recently announced a profound shift in the role of the Kentucky Virtual Campus as becoming a convener of partners and as a catalyst for innovation and excellence in learning. The new forum for KYVC must be integrated into Council policies in this area.

Recommendations for Working Group

The charge of the working group would be to review state policies related to approval of postsecondary programs and extended campuses. The review should include, but not be limited to, regional postsecondary education centers and extended-campus policies to further the 2020 Public Agenda's call for increased postsecondary access while promoting productivity and efficient use of resources. A review of the existing policies and the off-campus course delivery is needed for better alignment with the current conditions. Recommendations for changes, if needed, would be proposed by the working group for Council review.

The chair of the working group would be appointed by the Council chair. Multiple perspectives are needed to address these comprehensive Council policy issues, but the group should be made up of no more than 20 members to expedite the process. Representatives of adult education, regional stewardship leaders, distance learning, business leaders, and campus academic program leaders representing the sectors of research universities,

comprehensive universities, public two-year institutions, independent institutions and proprietary institutions should be included on the working group to address the effectiveness of current policies in supporting Kentucky's postsecondary needs and make recommendations for change.

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Kentucky Postsecondary Institutions

CC = Community College
CTC = Community and Technical College
TC = Technical College

Independent Institutions are named in italics.

Institutional Areas of Geographic Responsibility are shown in dark outlines.

KENTUCKY
Council
on Postsecondary Education
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Gateway CTC
Thomas More College
Northern Kentucky University

Maysville CTC

Ashland CTC

University of Louisville
Bellarmine University
Spalding University
Jefferson CTC

Kentucky Christian University

Kentucky State University

Georgetown College

Morehead State University

Midway College

University of Kentucky
Transylvania University
Bluegrass CTC

Henderson CC

Asbury College

Eastern Kentucky University

Brescia University
Kentucky Wesleyan College
Owensboro CTC

St Catharine College

Big Sandy CTC
North East Regional Postsecondary Education Center

Elizabethtown CTC
Central Regional Postsecondary Education Center

Centre College

Berea College

Pikeville College

Madisonville CC

Campbellsville University

Alice Lloyd College

West Kentucky CTC

Lindsey Wilson College

Somerset CC

Hazard CTC
University Center of the Mountains

Southeast Kentucky CTC

Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green TC

Southern Regional Postsecondary Education Center

South East Regional Postsecondary Education Center

Hopkinsville CC
West Regional Postsecondary Education Center

Union College

Mid-Continent University

South Central Regional Postsecondary Education Center

University of the Cumberlands

Murray State University

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